

HEARSAY

THE ROAD TO REFORM

Arizona Leads the Way

Welcome to our first issue of *Hearsay*, a newsletter dedicated to jurors. It is yours to keep.

We hope you find this first issue both informative and enjoyable.

Please help us improve our jury system by completing the satisfaction survey on the back page.

We always appreciate your comments and suggestions.

Your voice as a juror is needed to ensure fairness and justice in our community.

Thank you for your commitment to Justice.

Superior Court of Arizona
in Maricopa County



Ever heard the phrase: "You're never a hero in your own backyard." Such is true with jury reform in the United States. Arizona leads the nation in creating a more meaningful and worthwhile role for jurors in the trial process. New Arizona efforts focus on helping jurors understand trial proceedings and encourage more active participation in the trial itself. These are very far-reaching changes in legal and judicial systems.

These reform efforts began in 1993, when the Arizona Supreme Court Committee on More Effective Use of Juries was established. Now jurors not only have the ability to actively participate in the process, but also have the right to take notes and ask questions, which enables them to better understand the evidence and legal instructions. In essence, Arizona has transformed the courtroom into an interactive classroom.

Here is a look at some of the jury reforms:

Mini Opening Statements before Voir Dire : Trials

With the Court's consent, parties may present brief opening statements explaining the case to all prospective jurors prior to selection of the actual trial jurors (a process called "voir dire").

Juror Note-Taking: All Trials

Jurors in Arizona have had the right to take notes in criminal cases for more than 20 years. The recent reforms, however, now require that jurors be allowed to take notes during civil and criminal trials and use them during deliberations. Note taking helps jurors remember evidence and testimony, creating more of a "classroom" learning environment.

Discussing the Evidence : Civil Trials Only

Arizona civil juries are instructed that they may discuss the evidence in private among themselves as long as they are all present. Juror discussion of the case during trial is not permitted in criminal cases, however. Jurors are also advised that they must reserve final judgment as to the outcome and must keep an open mind as to the issues until all of the evidence, the court's instructions on the law, and the final arguments of counsel have been presented.

Juror's Right to ask Questions: All Trials

Juror questions must be in writing and delivered to the bailiff before the witness leaves the courtroom; counsel must be given an opportunity to object and jurors must be advised of the limitation on the question that can be asked. Allowing jurors to ask questions helps clarify issues, especially in the age of complex scientific evidence and confusing facts in complicated cases.

Time Limits: Trials

Courts have the power to enforce reasonable time limits during trial. This change is designed to shorten trials not only in deference to jurors, but also to litigants, who are prompted to prepare better and improve their presentations due to time limitations.

JURY SERVICE GOES ONLINE

Superior Court, recognized as one of the most innovative courts in the country, developed a new online program to make it easier for Valley residents to serve on jury duty. The new service, at www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov/jury/jury_info.html is available to the nearly 400,000 Maricopa County residents summoned to jury duty each year.

A significant number of prospective jurors cannot serve on jury duty when scheduled because of unchangeable travel commitments, surgery, or other reasons.

Prior to the web site service, the only way prospective jurors could seek a postponement was to note the conflict on the summons reply form and mail it back to the jury office.

With the new web site feature, time is saved and personnel expenses reduced. Now, with a click of the mouse, prospective jurors can instantly change their jury service date when events would prevent them from being able to serve as scheduled by the court. The new online service allows jurors to postpone their service for 90 or 120 days.

A second new web site feature for jurors lets them use the computer instead of the telephone to confirm their juror status. All prospective jurors are required to check with the court the evening before jury duty for instructions for the next day's service. Telephone hotlines with recorded messages are still available for jurors to confirm their service by calling 602.506.8000.

The court developed the new features to make it more convenient for the public to serve on jury duty, to provide greater accessibility to information for jurors and to streamline the system.

SUPERIOR COURT GOES HIGH-TECH



Construction is near completion at the downtown Phoenix complex on eight high-technology courtrooms that will make for speedier, more efficient trials.

The plans call for video monitors for each juror, listening devices for translation and the hearing impaired, real time transcript systems (similar to closed caption television) and a two-way video system for off-site witnesses permitting live testimony piped into the courtroom and monitors

mounted throughout the courtroom for evidence display and presentations.

The two-way video system will allow a DNA specialist to demonstrate from a lab rather than try to explain the science from a witness stand. These high-tech features will reduce the time needed for trials which means jurors will spend less time away from their jobs and family. Witness travel expenses and costs can also be reduced.

The translation system will allow for non-English speaking jurors and will help make juries even more diverse. Courthouses across the nation are moving toward "e-courtrooms" as new technologies are applied to justice systems.

Thank you for your commitment to justice. Without willing jurors, the fairness and integrity of our judicial system could not be maintained.

During your service, judges, attorneys, and court staff shall make every effort to assure that you are:

1. Treated with courtesy and respect and with regard to your privacy.
2. Randomly selected for jury service, free from discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, economic status or physical disability.
3. Provided with comfortable and convenient facilities, with special attention to the needs of jurors with physical disabilities.
4. Informed of trial schedules that are then kept.
5. Informed of the trial process and of the applicable law in plain and clear language.
6. Able to take notes during trial and to ask questions of witnesses or the judge and to have them answered as permitted by law.
7. Told of the circumstance under which you may discuss the evidence during the trial among yourselves in the jury room, while all are present, as long as you keep an open mind on guilt or innocence or who should win.
8. Entitled to have questions and requests that arise or are made during deliberations as fully answered and met as allowed by law.
9. Offered appropriate assistance from the court when you experience serious anxieties as a result of jury service.
10. Able to express concerns, complaints and recommendations to courthouse authorities.

HOW THE COURT WORKS

More than 100 judicial officers sit on the bench of the Superior Court in Maricopa County.

The Superior Court has two jury assembly locations, the downtown Phoenix complex, and the Southeast Facility in Mesa.

The presiding judge oversees judicial departments and court administrative offices.

Judges are appointed through a merit process. Judicial candidates are selected for their legal ability and professional and personal achievements rather than their mastery of political campaigns.

Applicants for judicial appointment are screened by the Commission on Trial Court Appointments, a nonpartisan committee. The Commission reviews all applications, interviews candidates and selects finalists whose names are forwarded to the Governor. The Governor reviews the applications, interviews each finalist and appoints one of them to the bench.

Superior Court judges in Maricopa County remain in office by the approval of voters in retention elections. There are no opponents in these elections. Voters cast a "yes" vote to retain a judge in office and a "no" vote to oppose their retention. Every two years each judge undergoes a public review process, including a survey of the judge's ability by lawyers, litigants, jurors and staff. Judges face a retention election every four years.

Commissioners and hearing officers are appointed by the court's presiding judge from attorneys who apply and are recommended by a selection committee made up of judges, lawyers and the public. They handle specific assigned cases, uncontested matters and other duties.



Superior Court Locations

Central Court Building
201 W. Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85003

East Court Building
101 W. Jefferson
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Juvenile Court - Durango
3125 W. Durango
Phoenix, AZ 85009

Juvenile Court - Mesa
1810 S. Lewis Street
Mesa, AZ 85210

Old Court House
125 W. Washington
Phoenix, AZ 85003

Southeast Court Facility - Mesa
222 E. Javelina Avenue
Mesa, AZ 85210

West Court Building
111 S. 3rd Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85003

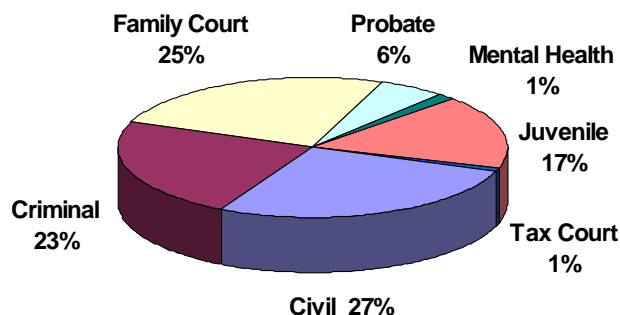
Superior Court Cases

Contrary to public perception, the majority of cases filed in Superior Court consist of civil disputes, not criminal charges.

Civil cases involve legal conflicts among individuals, businesses, corporations, partnerships and governmental entities. Most civil cases are the result of personal injury, property damage, medical malpractice and contract disputes.

Jurors are summoned for two types of cases: civil and criminal. The other court departments -- juvenile, family court, tax, probate and mental health do not have jury trials.

**Total Cases
Filed
114,407
(FY 2000)**



HOW TO REACH US

Adult Probation	602.506.3261
Civil Court Admin.	602.506.1497
Clerk of the Court	602.506.3676
Court Administration (Downtown Phoenix)	602.506.3204
Court Administration (Mesa Court Complex)	602.506.2020
Criminal Court Admin.	602.506.8575
Family Court Admin.	602.506.1561
Jury Office-Downtown	602.506.5879
Jury Office-Mesa	602.506.2056
Juvenile Court (Durango Complex)	602.506.4401
Juvenile Court (Mesa Court Complex)	602.506.2544
Law Library	602.506.3461
Probate/Mental Health	602.506.3668
Self Service Center	602.506.SELF

CourtTalk

Speakers Program

CourtTalk was created to educate and inform the community about the justice system.

We will provide a speaker to present thought-provoking and important information appropriate to your audience.

However, the Judicial Code of Ethics prevents court officials from talking about pending court cases.

We look forward to assisting you in promoting and enhancing public understanding of the court system.

How to Schedule a CourtTalk

By Phone: Call 506-TALK (506-8255) and leave a voice mail message. The Court's Community Relations Office will contact you.

On the World Wide Web: www.superiorcourt.maricopa.gov and then click on Public Information/Community Relations



DOWNTOWN PHOENIX EVENT/DINING LOCATIONS

America West Arena

201 E. Jefferson St.
Food Court, Event Tickets and Shops
(602) 379-7800

Arizona Center

Van Buren Street between 3rd and 5th Streets
Restaurants, Food Court and Shops
(602) 271-4000

Bank One Ballpark

401 E. Jefferson St.
Restaurants and Event Tickets
(602) 514-8400

Change of Venue

201 W. Jefferson, Superior Court Building
Breakfast, lunch,snacks and beverages

Heritage Square

7th & Monroe Sts.
Restaurants, Historic sites
(602) 262-5071

Luhrs Building

1 W. Jefferson Street
Restaurants, Shops,Passport Photo's

Maricopa County Administration

401 W. Jefferson
Elected County Officials, Job Postings

Patriots Square Park

One W. Washington St.
Food and Special Events
(602) 261-8055

MESA DINING LOCATION

Mesa Courthouse Cafeteria

222 E. Javelina
Breakfast, lunch, snacks and beverages

JUROR SATISFACTION SURVEY

Please detach and leave in suggestion box in jury assembly room

Was your jury service satisfactory?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Improvement

Was your jury summons easy to read/understand?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Improvement

Was the court staff courteous and helpful?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Needs Improvement

Please provide comments/suggestions for improving jury service.